

WORDS TWO

*Compiled by
Maureen Scott and
Lorna Delanoy*



*People, places and pictures
of the Fen Country around Ely.*

Introduction...

Maureen and Lorna have collected words and phrases, facts and stories from Cambridgeshire Fens for over half a century. Maureen has been an active committee member of the Littleport Society and Lorna's family set up the Farmland Museum at Haddenham which is now housed at Denny Abbey.

This is the second compilation, the first one titled WORDS, WORDS and MORE WORDS, and they would like to thank friends and family from far and near for their varied contributions without which WORDS TWO would not have evolved.

A to Z of more words used in the Fen Country

Adnam – Haddenham; the author Edward Storey confused the Fen village with the brewery at Southwold!

Adam's Ale - water

Allus – always

Arter – after

Aah – a secret, not telling

Afore – before

Aitch – the letter H, NOT HAITCH as is common on BBC!

Bor – a male, at any age

Barled eggs – boiled eggs

Britches /bloomers/longjohns –underwear

Blower – telephone

Belt up – stop talking!

Butter fingers – to drop things

Bees knees –top whole, very good

Bread and pullet – limited choice in food

Broughtens up – way child is taught

Buer – Butter (often "Ts" were dropped eg caery cattery, waer water)

Blaring – child crying/cows crying after calves are taken from them

Blow out – eat too much, a car tyre burst

Brangle – dispute or quarrel

Backards – backwards (esp when telling horse to reverse!)

Bonkers – rubbish/mad!

Bully-fork – two-tined with short wood handle for passing sheaves on stack

Birthday Suit – naked

Bubble and squeak – fried left-over veg., often used up on Mondays

Barra – short for wheelbarrow

Clack – chatter/gossip

Cut across – hurry along/take a shorter way

Carrot cruncher – another name for Fen folk esp in Chatteris area

Coopee – chickens (from hen coops?)

Coopee egg for breakfast (baby talk)

Clodopper – Ag Lab; also clodhoppers – big feet

Cut off hum – go home!
Chats – small potatoes (used to be fed to pigs)
Clamp/pit – store of potatoes under soil out in field
Clout/clip round the ear – reprimand from former school masters!
Chit – young girl, as in chick (Yorks)
Chuck – to throw
Cack-handed – left-handed, clumsy
Clobber – unwanted stuff (particularly in sheds/stores)
Chimbley – chimney
Conflab – talk/gossip
Crome – two tines on fork, bent at right angles for pulling

Door step – thickly-cut bread
Dim wit/dumbo/dunce/half sharp – has difficulty in understanding
Dog-tired – exhausted
Dilantery – dilatory, reluctant
Dragged up - poor upbringing
Dreckly – soon (corruption of directly)
Doddy – very small
Driv – past of verb drive
Dag – dew/mist
Ding-dong – quarrel
Do-lally – half sharp/simple
Droove – drove (note past tense)
Dwile – floor cloth

Enhouse – another word where the H is dropped

Frit – frightened
Fartarsing about – messing about, wasting time
Frimmocksing – titivating
Fink/fort – use F instead of Th
Frummity –(frumenty) local dish made with wheat
Flit – to move house
Flummocks – to confuse
Furriner – someone from abroad, or even the next county!

Ganzie – (Jersey) jumper/wool sweater
Gotch – jug
Gotcha!-caught you!
Gorp – stare at
Grub – both for humans and animals (now often refers to food at pubs)
Gal – girl/woman of any age
Goo it – go away, get on with it!
Gorn – going/gone
Git – get
Gunna – going to.....
Granfer - Granddad
Gip – pain (esp rheumatic type)
Gander – look around, wander
Grounds – fen word for fields

Hen's teeth – very rare
Hen's arseful – small amount
Hodmedod/hodnedod – snail
Hubback – telling horse to reverse
Housen – old word for houses
Higgledy-piggledy –untidy
Hay-ya – have you?
Hoss/oss – horse
Hawkey – party, esp after Harvest
Hutcha – hurt you
Hodding or hodney spade – for cutting sads and trimming dyke sides
Hedification – education (note use of H)
Hobnails – heavy working boots
Hob-nobbing – meeting up with one's superiors
Headland – end of field/turning space

Intcha – aren't you?
Iron horse – bicycle or bike

July razor – scythe (for cutting corn before binders/combines)
Jalop – spoonful of medicine
Jag – a little load (not the car!)
Jigger me – exclamation of surprise

Jawrin – arguing
Jim Crabb – tool for turning bends

Kelter – clutter, especially in outbuildings
Knock off – finish work for that day

Lazybones – idle
Loose-tongued – a gossip
Lugged – to carry a heavy load
Lallygags – protection for legs in muddy conditions
Loopy – silly/stupid
Lug - ear

Martrous – very big (corruption of monstrous?)
Muzzle/mizzle – light rain
Milk mess – bread and hot milk, plus sugar (early cereal!)
Me – instead of MY
Muckle – corruption of muck heap
Meece – mice
Mooch – stroll around, with no particular purpose
Muck in – to join in the game/celebration
Missus – the wife

Nanny washtail – local name for wagtail
Nick – steal
Nick off – go off, sometimes with stealth
Nip – go quickly!
Nippy – cold weather
Nuff - enough

Occard – awkward
Oi – come here!
Osses – horses (another case of the dropped H)
Owd – old
Om – I am /I'm
Ole biddy – old lady

Penny-pincher – careful with money
Pork-cheese – brawn
Paigle – cowslip
Pill/sowbug – woodlice
Popple/popular – poplar tree
Push – boil, abcess
Pitch-fork – two-tined for picking up sheaves and loading onto cart

Rack-up – check animals last thing at night
Ruttley, rattlin – irritating cough
Rum – odd (not the drink!) eg Rum Dew, odd happening
Reccoon – to think, give opinion
Roobub - rhubarb

Scour – to wash thoroughly
Skeedaddle – run away
Smur – drizzle
Sparrargrass – asparagus (often grown in Ely area)
Skin-flint – penniless
Shank's pony – walk
Shut-eye – sleep
Stint – restriction (corruption of STENT?)
Slar – spread around (eg paint/oil)
Stiffcate/sustifficat – certificate
Sheffanier – sideboard
Stunt hill/wooden hill – staircase
Slodger – ditcher and dyker/Ag Lab in the fen
Stook/ shock – pile of sheaves left to dry (before the days of combines)
Screws – rheumatic pain/arthritis
Somethink – the K replacing G, something
Slobber chops – messy eater
Squirt – a mischievous child
Squit – gossip, idle talk, often used in Norfolk Fens
Smidgen – a little bit
Squige, squizz – a crafty peep
Shanny – slippery, sly person
Shanks's pony – walk
Shilly-shally – to dawdle, waste time
Slubbing spade – spoon -shaped in wood, to scoop out mud

Sheet lane – bed clothes
Shut up – be quiet

Telltale tit – person who tells lies
Taters/spuds – potatoes
Tisick – repetitive cough as in Asthma
Trap/gob - mouth
Tret – treated
Trough – kitchen/dining table

Uracle – Uncle
Uvver – over

Wombling – walking badly (not the Wombles from Wimbledon Common!)
Winders – windows
Whoop – Hello, greeting
Wooden overcoat – coffin
Wallop – hit someone hard
Went – often spoken when "gone" would be better grammar
Whato/whatcha – hello, greeting
Washes – grazing land near waterways (ie not arable)
Writings – legal papers, documents, deeds

Yelm/yealm – bunch of straw (usually wheat) for thatching
Yon – further
Yelk – yellow part of egg (combines yolk with yellow)

The ORANGE SWIMSUIT is a true story written in prose by Gillian Peak of Soham; it was published in WHEN I WAS A CHILD (2007 and later appeared in one of Gervais Phinn's publications (ALL OUR YESTERDAYS)) Here is the amusing story again, both in prose and verse; much enjoyed by Over Sixties audiences!

In the good old days when Soham had a railway station, I was frequently taken along with my cousins to Hunstanton for the day, and on one occasion for a whole week. I really enjoyed the journey especially as the train was hauled by a steam engine, but I never enjoyed the actual seaside and I suspect the following story may well be the reason.

Upon arrival at the beach my mother would produce my swimsuit and tell me to put it on. I hated the ghastly thing, it was bright orange and someone had knitted it for me. It was like a pair of shorts with straps and a bib at the front, the straps fastened with rubber buttons and when I wore it I looked just like a woolly Jaffa.

If I kept out of the sea it was just about tolerable, but when wet I feel it is better left to the imagination than described.

Each summer it continued to fit, it sort of grew with me. After several years I discovered the power of prayer and prayed as hard as I could that the dreaded thing would get the moth and low and behold the following summer when my mother produced it from it's winter resting place my prayers had been answered. The moth had had a great feast and the moth had rendered the swimsuit no longer wearable.

A new swimsuit was purchased and we continued to make our trips to Hunstanton but to this day I am not fond of the seaside in the summer months but prefer to visit in the winter when everywhere is wild, deserted and very beautiful and that is when I enjoy being on the beach well wrapped up.

The orange swimsuit is now a distant memory but I cannot help feeling that it has a lot to answer for.

THE ORANGE SWIMSUIT

“There is no substitute for wool”
A phrase you often hear.
But when applied to swimsuits
It’s far from true I fear.
Especially if the chosen wool
Is of a gaudy hue
Although the colour was bright orange,
It left the wearer feeling blue!

The needle size was not disclosed
On which the garment was knitted –
Nor the details of the pattern
Or how well, or not, it fitted.
The swimsuit wasn’t shown in Paris,
That place you couldn’t reach...
And so they went for the next best venue,
And “launched” it on Hunstanton beach.

The young model felt self-conscious
And she soon began to fret.
The ghastly thing got even worse,
The moment you got it wet.
The wearer hated it so much,
In fact she could have cried;
And she would run round frantically
Until the damned thing dried.

Each year as she grew, so did it,
Stretching instead of shrinking!
And things by then were desperate –
It needed some serious thinking.
Suddenly an idea came to her,
Perhaps God would come to her aid.
And after more thought, for a “moth attack”
The poor girl fervently prayed!

By next Summer, her prayers had been answered,
You could see where the moth had been.
But never again on Hunstanton beach
Was the unhappy “Miss Jaffa” ever seen!

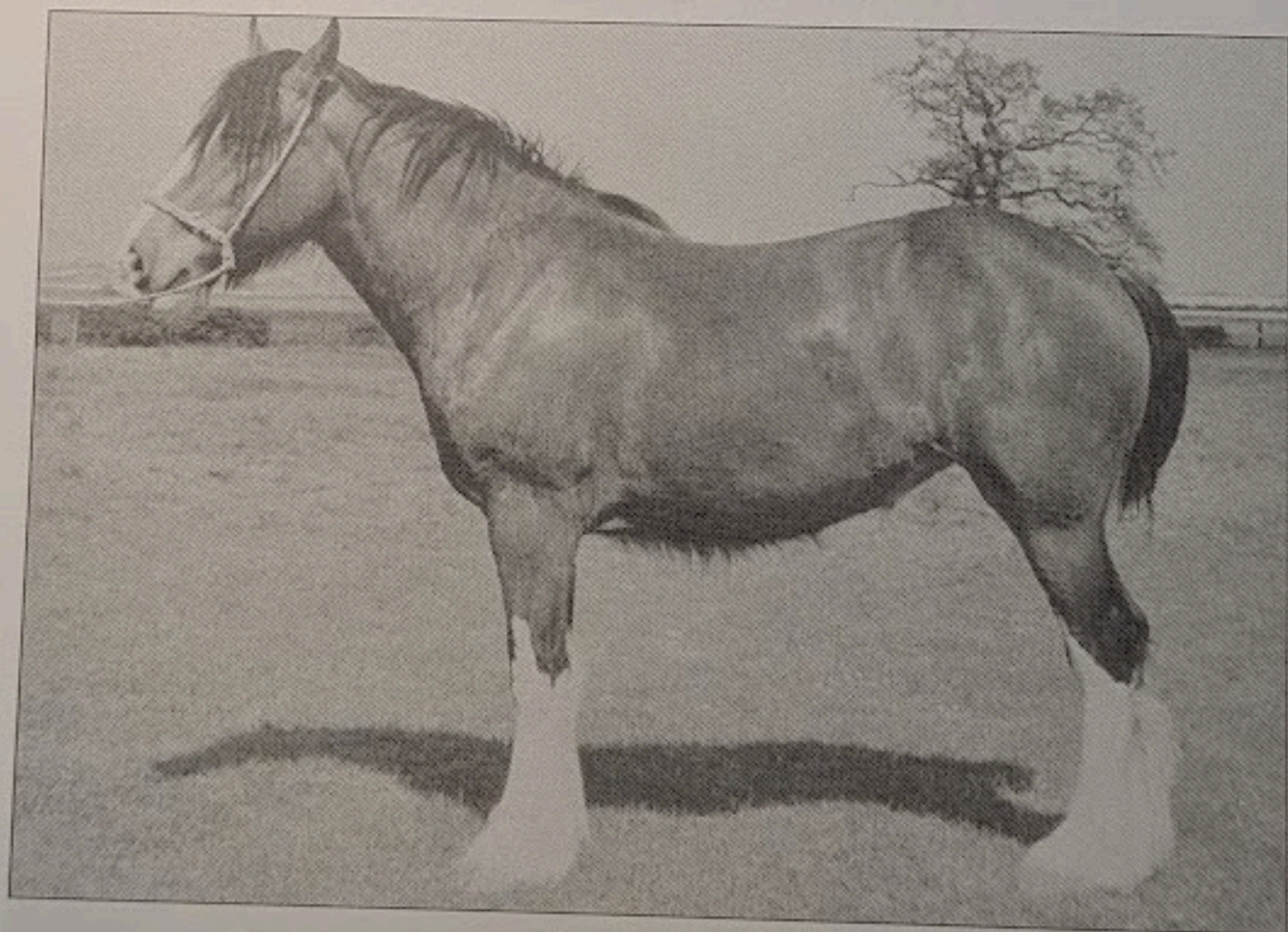


Josh riding the bull on the Washes





Josh feeding wildfowl at the Welney Reserve.



Source of power on Fen Farms when Josh was a boy.

Josh Scott was chosen by Peter Scott to be the first warden at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre at Welney; he is the brother-in-law of Maureen Scott; this is a transcription of an interview made in 1977 for the Farmland Museum Sound Archive.

Josh Scott of Welney, Wildfowler and a very knowledgeable Fenman on such topics as bird life, flooding, skating and shepherding

The full story of the life of Josh can be read in his book "From Guns to Binoculars", but here are a few of his recollections told in 1977.

Work on the Washes

"For generations the Washes have been used for summer grazing, mainly by horses, and they were looked after and checked each day by my forefathers; the animals' owners lived as far away as Diss and Saffron Walden. However, in the winter there was no work for these 'shepherds', so they asked the wash owners if they could have the shooting rights of the land and anything they could find on it. Wildfowling became a way of life and eels were a source of money. Mushrooms and blackberries could be eaten or sold. My Great Uncle, Will Kent, lived on the Washes and after I had had an accident and hurt my knee (running to get some cigs from the pub for the old men), my Great Aunt invited me to stay down at the cottage with them, and it was there I learned so much about life in the Fen, being a lad about ten at the time."

Son Follows Father

"My Dad looked after about 200 acres before the Second World War. I was taken prisoner until 1946 and, when I returned home, I was offered the 500 acres which Shepherd Smart had looked after, but was then too

ill to do so and so that was how I became employed on the Washes. When Sir Peter Scott (no relation!) was looking for a Warden for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, it was suggested that as I was the "bird Man" the job should be offered to me, and so that is how I became the first warden at the Welney Reserve." (The Wildfowl and Wetland Reserve is open every day of the year except Christmas Day.)

Museum Open Day

In his retirement Josh enjoyed demonstrating the 'explosions' from his punt gun and was a regular attraction at both the Wildfowling and Conservation Days at Haddenham and the Country Fairs at Swaffham Prior. His punt gun is a permanent exhibit at the Welney Centre, reminding visitors of how the duck were "harvested" from the Washes years ago.

ADDENDUM

Josh had several brothers and one of them, Aubrey, relates the following anecdotes re Josh's relationship with animals:

Josh would run down the river bank, gathering speed as he did so, and jump straight onto a bull's back; all the farm workers were terrified of the beast but Josh could put two fingers in the nose ring and lead the big bull up the bank; many photos were taken of Josh "riding" the bull and even standing upright on its back.

Another animal story is of Josh training an orphan lamb to respond to a whistle: the lamb, called Billy, played with his dog called Sam; at the command of a whistle Billy would chase the dog along the road (traffic was a lot less in those days!), turn and be chased back by Sam; this caused amusement to onlookers!

Josh's control of Sam was such that no one DARE go near the car if the dog was sitting in the boot where he was "on guard" yet away from the car (off duty) Sam was a real softie and family pet

Over the years many people commented on the way Josh had a special relationship with birds and beasts and more stories can be read in his own book entitled FROM GUNS TO BINOCULARS

"Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves"
 was a phrase used a lot during the war. In the Littleport area copies of Mother Shipton's predictions were printed and sold for a few coppers to help with the war effort (note: the last lines were added by a Victorian writer and were not included in Mother Shipton's original statements). Amazing to read how many of her thoughts have materialised.. e.g. "carriages without horses shall go" ... think of modern transport and "thoughts shall fly" ... think phones and emails!

Mother Shipton's Prophecy.

"Near the Petrifying Well, I first saw lights as records tell"

Born 1488.

Died 1561.

Over a wild and stormy sea
 Shall a noble* sail
 Who to find will not fail
 A new and fair countree,
 From whence he shall bring
 A herb+ and a root~
 That all men shall suit,
 And please both ploughman and king,
 And let them take more than
 measure,
 Both shall have the even pleasure,
 In the belly and the brain,
 Carriages without horses shall go,
 And accidents fill the world with woe,
 Primrose Hill in London shall be
 And in the centre a Bishop's See.
 Around the world thoughts shall fly
 In the twinkling of an eye,
 Water shall yet more wonders do
 How strange, yet shall be true,
 Through hills men shall ride,
 And no horse or ass be by their side
 Under water men shall walk,
 Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk,
 In the air men shall be seen,
 In white, in black and in green.
 A great man shall come and go -
 Three times shall lovely France,
 Be led to play a bloody dance,
 Before her people shall be free
 Three tyrant rulers shall she see
 Three times the people's hope is gone
 Three rulers in succession see
 Each springing from different dynasty
 Then shall the worsen fight be done
 England and France shall be as one

Men shall walk over rivers and under
 rivers.
 Iron in water shall float,
 As easy as a wooden boat.
 Gold shall be found, and found
 In a land that's not now known.
 Fire and water shall more wonders do.
 England shall at last admit a Jew.
 The Jew that was held in scorn
 Shall of a Christian be born.
 A house of glass shall come to pass
 In England, but alas!
 War will follow, with the work
 In the land of the pagan and Turk,
 And State and State in fierce strife
 Will seek each others life
 But when the North shall divide the
 South
 An eagle shall build in the lion's mouth
 Taxes for blood and for war,
 Will come to every door.
 All England's sons that plough the land
 Shall be seen book in hand
 Learning and so ebb and flow,
 The poor shall most learning know.
 Water shall flow were corn shall grow
 Corn shall grow, where waters doth flow
 Houses shall appear in the vales below
 And covered by hail and snow,
 The world then to an end shall come
 In Eighteen Hundred and Eighty One

 * Sir Walter Raleigh

+ Tobacco.

~ Potato.

The War Illustrated

2^d Weekly

ALL THE BEST OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Vol. 6

Letters From Home: Mail Day in the Trenches

No. 132

Not much money would be made by this weekly mag. Selling at less than a modern penny; the photos had to be taken, printed and the publication distributed... are copies to be found for sale on Ebay in 2014?

The following verses in Fen Dialect originally appeared in a publication entitled FENLAND FACTS AND FANCIES (2003) by Mike Delanoy.

FEN CHARACTERS (in dialect)

There are characters old and sum on um new
So I thought I'd wroite a line or tew
To tell yer a bit about sum o' these blokes
Cos us Fen Tigers are proud o' our folks!

The fust I wanna mention's 'ereward the Wake-
Thas a run'ole name for goodness sake,
But 'e was the 'ero who made the last stand
When the French decided to invade our land.

One o' th'ole monks from Ely they say
Went and told th'ole Froggies the way –
Now 'ereward, he dint agree with such deeds
So 'e burned 'em aloive when he set loight to the reeds!

Then there's Oliver Cromwell, you can often see
Programmes about 'im on local TV.
"Roundhead" they call 'im, but I fancy that
They dint reelly know, cos he wore a big 'at.

Tew modern characters who wornt known world-wide
Lived in the same village, nye on side by side,
They lived in Welney when toimes were 'arsh
And got their living from orf the marsh.

Ernie James, a truer Fenman I've never met-
He can make a basket or knit a net.
He used both o' these his eels to catch:
In country ways he was 'ard to match.....

Unless one considered 'is ole mate Josh Scott
With who he would argue whether or not
Each was the last one to use a Punt Gun-
Tho' they got roight heated, in was all in good fun!

Ashepherdin' the cattle grazin' on the Wash
That's wot he did in Summer, my ole mate Josh
And I think I'm lucky 'cos both these men I knowed
An' I can still apicture 'em as on the Wash they rowed!

FEN BLOWS (in dialect)

If yew're out in the fen and the wind be ablowin
There's sumthin yew oughta be aknowin.
Cos if that blow roight hard yew know
Yew're goin ter see wot we calls a "fen blow".

All the air that dew turn roight brown
Like them smogs they uster hev up Lunnon town
Cos when th'ole fen droies that goo reel foine
An the soil, that fills the ditches in next tu no toime.

There aint nuthin to stop the wind a roarin
An up in the skoie the peat dust asoarin
They've gotta plant more trees 'n 'edges
Dew the middle o' the fields'll be all round the edges!



*Horse power on the Fen Farm a hundred years ago
(it needed three horses to pull this reaper); later replaced by tractor-pulled binders
and now of course the enormous self-propelled combine harvesters.
Fields need to be bigger to accommodate such machines.*

NOW AND THEN ... Extracts from the monthly series written for a local weekly newspaper.

NOW and THEN...a monthly column by Eldee

Each month brings with it some special event, big or small, that is happening in the Ely Standard area....for September it is the annual steam event

For over thirty years the annual **Haddenham** Steam Rally has been held at Staple Leys, off the A1421 south of **Witcham Toll**. Each year it appears to be bigger and better, attracting people from all over the UK and beyond. Several local families in the Ely are/have been involved in the Steam World over the past century or so.

Drakes, followed by Darbys put **Sutton-in-the-Isle** firmly on the map from Victorian Times; last year a special exhibition of existing Darby plant together with an extensive display of old photographs formed a special attraction. The housing development off the Brook at Sutton perpetuates the name of the firm with its address panel of "Darby's Yard".

At **Stretham** the firm of Wesley's was responsible for testing the strength of the then-new bridge over the Old West River in 1930. There are splendid black and white photos in the bar of the Lazy Otter (originally called the Royal Oak) showing steam men and their traction engines lined up on the completed bridge....I often wonder what would have happened if the bridge had NOT withstood the weight?

Soham had its own engine builders, Fysons, who, when steam was no longer the power on the farms and for haulage, modernised to build agricultural machines such as conveyor systems for field crops.

Ely, in Broad Street, convenient for both water- and rail travel, had the firm of GRAVENS established there exactly 150 years ago. Gravens sold and repaired the giant engines for the Isle of Ely

land-owners. It is good to see that the family name is perpetuated on a new housing development together with an old advertising panel, now well-faded, on an adjacent wall. Today, 150 years on, Gravens is continuing "to serve the community" with family members involved in the garage/mini-market outlets at Soham, Ely and more recently, Littleport.

At the rally on the week-end of September 11th and 12th local modern-day steam men will include Barry and son Matthew Peacock of Wilburton. Earlier members of the Peacock family owned threshing tackles which travelled round the farms to thresh the corn crops before the days of the combine harvester. Engines together with tractors, old farm equipment and other rural by-gones will show visitors just what farming was like in years gone by. Together with a full entertainment programme and "all the joys of the fair" it promises, as ever, to be an action-packed event for everyone. The organising committee is to be congratulated in putting on such a splendid show each September; it has certainly put the village of Haddenham firmly on the map.

October is the month for APPLES and local firm Watergull Orchards (originally based in Sutton-in-the-Isle and now at Wisbech, Queen of the Isle) has done much to promote the Apple Festival, held each year in Ely...a firm fixture in the Autumn Calendar.

The small village of Prickwillow has had excellent coverage in October too; as well as the beautifully restored collection of engines in the Drainage Engine Museum (well worth a visit) hundreds of people from near and far flocked to the Ploughing Match, an opportunity to admire the skill of the ploughmen with both horses and tractors, new and vintage. In the old days the Ag Labs would pedal round the fens spying on whose furrows were the straightest or whose had a wobble half-way up the field!

NOW AND THEN.....OCTOBER OFFERINGS

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”....yes, Autumn is almost here and with it the softer warmth of October Days. At this time of year one thinks of the lines of the hymn “All is safely gathered in” and harvest festival services .It was an Anglican clergyman down in Cornwall, Revd Hawker, who “invented” the idea of special harvest festival gatherings way back in 1843...and they have spread throughout the British Isles.

The cathedral, “Ship of the Fens” always looks at its best when decorated with locally-grown fruits, flowers and vegetables; were there record crowds there this year?

Services in both large churches and small chapels are held to “thank the Lord” for all the wonderful gifts at this season of the year.

I well remember being taken as a child to little fen chapels at such romantically-named places as Westmoor, Oxloode, Dairy Houses and Wardy Hill to sing lustily with the farming folk “We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land , but it is fed and watered by God’s almighty hand”.....do today’s children really appreciate or indeed understand where their food comes from?

I am reminded of the child who was asked if he knew where milk came from...his reply was that of a well-known supermarket. How I hated the smell of fresh milk on a warm summer evening, which my Granny would “separate” in her dairy, leaving the cream to settle to be turned into butter (to be sold on a stall at the appropriately-named BUTTERMARKET in Ely). The skimmed milk was sold at two-pence a jug-full from her farmhouse door. What is the price of a pint of skim milk today? A herd of cows is a rare sight in the fields around Ely so I suppose any child could be forgiven thinking that, like most of the food consumed nowadays, comes from a shop beginning with the letter T

I noticed last week at my own village chapel that there were “branded” goods both in tins and packets in contrast to the garden/allotment produce of the Forties; one old boy (is that just a Fen Expression?) always brought along a brace of pigeons from his duffus (dovehouse in non-fen English)...after all, it was meat for the table (to go with the mounds of veg) with negligible “food miles” of which we hear so much today.

Auction sales often followed on Monday evenings and I seem to remember there were always so many marrows; in fact some years they were given away as “free gifts”. This reminds me of a local gardener who had a glut of marrows so he put a barrow-load of them outside his house with the hand-scrawled notice “Help yourself”. On returning home later in the day he found a big box of giant marrows had been added to his freebies. Has this been a good year for marrows I wonder? No need to inform me Yea or Nay as they are a vegetable that I do not like! However, when I was a child, in the war years, we were expected to eat everything on our plates....waste was an unknown word in our vocabulary!

Do you believe in folk/country sayings regarding the weather? A common one is

“Onion skin very thin,
Mild Winter coming in.
Onion skin thick and tough,
Coming winter cold and rough”

Does the appearance of masses of berries in hedges and gardens mean that a harsh Winter is in store?...food for the birds is there on the trees in plentiful quantities.

Another saying which seems to have some relevance:

“No weather is ill if the wind be still”...those of us who follow our barometers as opposed to the weather forecasters on TV(which can vary enormously depending on which TV station one listens to!) can appreciate this, as it concerns air pressure in our own locality. Set your own barometer to the level advised each Thursday evening on Look East!

Did your grass grow long this Summer? Then “If in Summer the grass grows long,
Then come Autumn the winds will be strong”...so be ye warned.

To end on a seasonal note I quote a verse written by a Fenman:

“As Summer turns to Autumn over every reed bed
Swallows catch “insect energy” for the journey ahead.
The flora now changes from green to brown –
The time is approaching for the Winter’s dawn

Regardless of how much money is spent on weather forecasting, we have no choice in what we get so as a friend of mine always says “Make the best of it” and be thankful that we have not had the suffering of “bad weather” this Autumn as has been experienced in India and Pakistan . It is encouraging that so much money and help has been offered by the UK to help those unfortunate people and so we too may join with Rev Hawker of over a hundred and fifty years ago in “thanksgiving for harvest”.

This list of Fen Words was prepared by an elderly Fenman for use by Homerton Students who did an Education project for local schools when the Farmland Museum was situated at Haddenham ... there may well be duplication of some of the words in Book 1.

WORDS FROM THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENS

BEARS MUCK	phosphotic nodules dug up and used as fertilizer
BLAR	to cry/be upset
BOR	young lad
CHATS	small potatoes (orig. fed to pigs)
CLAGGY	sticky, messy
CLAMP	heap of stored potatoes (covered with straw & soil)
CRAZE	to pester, to worry someone
DICKY	donkey
DING	a blow or hit on head
DIZZY	silly
DOCKEY	mid-morning meal of bread and cheese
DODDY	small, tiny
FEN NIGHTINGALE	frog
FLIT	to move house
FUDDLER	cack-handed, awkward
GET SHUT	get shot of, get rid of
GANSEY	jersey
HEADLAND	end of field (turning area)
HODMEDAD	snail (children used to "race" them)
HOUSEN	houses
LALLYGAGS	extra covering for trouser bottoms
LODE	man-made waterway
LUG	to lift, carry heavy load
MOGGY	cat (sometimes a mouse!)
PAIGLE	cowslip, now a feature in 'wild' gardens
PARKY	cold weather
SLUB, SLUBBY	wet mud
SPUDS/TATERS	potatoes
SHOCK	heap of corn sheaves in field (pre-combine days)
YOURN	genitive, e.g. "ourn = our house

Can you add to the list? Very old people can come up with some wonderful words!

John Taylor is "Littleport Born and Bred"; his memories of childhood there are recorded in his book RAISING FEN TIGERS; as a result of reading WORDS and MORE WORDS, he sent the following verses and added a considerable number of words to this edition, for many years his home has been "down under" in Australia ... but he firmly remembers his roots!

I Wonder

I left the Fens a long time ago.
Yet my memories often glow.

But now I wonder...?

Do boys still fish with bamboo rods?
Or look for worms under heavy sods?

Do women still go onion wringing?
Or arch their backs celery pricking?

Are field potatoes still dug by spinning?
Do women still go potato picking?

Do boys still catch the cob?
For fun and to earn a Bob?

Do Bog Oaks make the ploughing stop?
Are spuds still stored in a Stock?

Are new spuds peeled with stick and bucket?
Does Mum still complain about the racket?

Has anyone found King John's treasure?
Or has a farmer hidden it for his pleasure?

Do seagulls still follow the plough?
When tilling starts, how do they know?

Do hares still run as fast as ever?
And did rabbits get over their fever?

Do boys still collect motor car numbers?
Or on Sundays polish their handles and bumpers?

Do boys still catch Sticklebacks in a jar?
Are Corn Dollies still seen from afar?

Do boys still know how to put chickens to sleep?
Do old ladies glean for leftover wheat?

Do Mums still make Crabapple Jelly?
Or bottle fruit and rhubarb for the winter belly?

Are Dock leaves still used to ease the pain?
Are children still told to... "pull the chain?"

Do children help to turn Mum's mangle?
Or hold hanks of wool at the right angle?

I know the answer to many of these things,
But simply asking makes my memories sing.

Words and expressions:

Dole: When a family member of a wealthy land owner died the workers would attend the funeral. Afterwards, lining up outside the church, each would be given a small loaf of bread. The bread and process was called "Dole."

"I'll go to Southery." - (*Arle goo-tu Southery*). An exclamation of surprise.

"Hang you on a minute." - A please wait request.

"Come you on here." - A come here request.

"Pull his/her nose long as long as a wet week." - Mostly used by a woman who threatens to "sort another woman out." Ref: *Raising Fen Tigers*. P22

Scragg: A word often used by boys meaning to wreck, destroy or put into disarray. If a boy upset another the offended boy and his pals would scragg him. This usually happened on the way home from school and involved pulling out his shirt, removing shoes and tossing them, playing football with his cap etc. while delivering verbal insults. Also if a birds nest was destroyed by a boy it was said to be scragged.

Glean: To collect, pick up. *Gleaning often fed the chickens with fresh corn from the field leftovers.*

Little old. - Old folks and children were frequently referred to as "Little Old." (*Little'ole*).
Little ole boy... little'ole man. Etc.

A Boys Reminiscences:

Hips and Hawes picked from the hedgerow were often the cause of great amusement and irritation. Boys would break them open to release the pips, which are covered in small sharp bristles. Put down another boy's back they itched like mad and could only be removed by washing the shirt.

Lost in the Fen Accent. This amusing incident from my sister Daphne some years ago: She and her young daughter Becky were visiting our grandparents in Littleport. Grandad amused Becky with old photographs. When they got home Becky asked. "What is a rumenene?" Daphne said she didn't know and asked Becky where she had heard it. Becky said: When Grandad was showing me the photos he pointed to a man and said. "He's a rumunene." (rum'un e ne).

Fen Hearts For me, this is the epitome of a true, big Fen heart. In my early twenties I was visiting my grandparents. After a while my Nan said she had to leave as she had promised Daisy she would do a bit of spring-cleaning for her. Adding in her wonderful Fen accent. "*Poor old thing, she can't get about much now-a-days... she's turned seventy you know! Well you have to look after her and see she's all right don't you.*" My Nan was 83 years old.

MADE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

A talk given by Peter Filby to members of the Cambridgeshire Local History Society last Autumn, has inspired me to write this article for the Friends' Newsletter.....his talk was entitled "Cambridgeshire Trades and Industries" and in what is very much an AGRICULTURAL county, there were a great many engineers and manufacturers. I began to look around the Farmland Museum and found the following "made in Cambs" exhibits:

A BROAD-SHARE with the name on its side; "W. Millar, maker, Haddenham" reminded me of his blacksmith's shop at Stone Cross Corner; Walter died in the mid-forties and a lot of his smithing tools were recycled to Stan Burgess, a well-known steam enthusiast

(for info. the broad-share is a horse-drawn implement consisting of two strong blades which were pulled through the stubble after harvest, preventing weeds(rubbish) taking root)

Another large implement is the CAMBRIDGE ROLL (named after its designer, a Mr. C., and not after the university city!); this was made by Varty of Royston (that town is now in Herts thanks to the boundary commission)

Coles of Chatteris was a well-known engineering firm in operation until the early eighties; the site of the works is now a housing estate called Cole's Walk; a PLOUGH made there, together with one "Cole, Ely" and a third, "Cole, Witchford" are all on display: not being a genealogist, I have been unable to sort out the family ties with these three although the late Brenda Cole assured me they were all related!

A very special implement for LIFTING SUGAR BEET (a "new" crop in the twenties), was made by Maynard of Whittlesford and, like Coles of Chatteris, their premises are now covered with houses. Another Whittlesford manufacturer is Arnolds and at the museum one of their CELERY ROLLS can be seen; this is a very specialised piece of equipment which was owned and used by the Kerridge Family of Littleport (it is said that before the war seventy five per cent of all celery consumed in the UK was grown within a fifteen mile radius of Kings Lynn; today the once-Winter crop is available all year round thanks to imports from Spain and Egypt)

A CART built by Alsops of Cambridge was used by the Fosseys of Great Eversden to bring fruit and vegetables into the market each week for sale; a "carrier's cart", it was built along Newmarket Road (where the Mackay's Shop is now situated) and is now standing with all the other fruit-growing exhibits from the Fossey Collection. The brightly-painted CART nearby was built by the Bysouths of Little Downham for the well-known Fen Farmer, Claude Starling of Primrose Farm, Pymoor. It has been lovingly restored in Sussex by the grandson of the maker and returned to Denny in 1998. A third CART is to be found in the Wheelwright's shop (behind the Visitors' Centre) It was built by the Watts firm of Stow cum Quy, the wheelwrights and undertakers whose complete contents of their shop is now one of the "jewels" on the Denny site. Edwards of Wisbech manufactured one of the iron PLOUGHS and that one is on display at the College of West Anglia at Wisbech as part of the Countryside Collection; a cultivator made by

Headley and Edwards of Newmarket Road, Cambridge is back at Denny; is there a connection between the two Edwards? One at the north of the county and one towards the south?

The name Barford Perkins of Peterborough is on a **CAKE BREAKER** (hard blocks of cotton-seed cake were broken up for animal-feed); Cooke of Yaxley nearby, is on a **SACK-LIFTER** (by turning a handle a sack could be lifted up – man-power used to change circular motion to vertical lift); a **LEAF RAKE** has “Wistow near Ramsey” on it (a village well worth visiting) and an **EGG CLEANER** from Waterbeach (the parish in which the Haddenham and Eversden Collections are amalgamated) awaits restoration.

Kidd of Willingham was “a man ahead of his time” and the **GARDEN SPRAYER** built there was operational in the early years of the museum (the Kidd Family also built Eiffel-tower like windmills and designed barn-lifting equipment, apple graders etc.) A photo of the Kidd Works can be seen in the blacksmith display in one of the “pig” sheds.

A good example of a **WOOD PLOUGH** came from Eversden., made by the local wheelwright family, Huddleston; the wood plough rescued from the tower of Bassingbourn church is so old that its origin is impossible to trace! It is the centre piece of the Farming Year display in the Stone Barn.

Many children enjoy “brass rubbing” the name plates in the barn; one of them is for a Littleport firm still in existence.....J. H. Adams, whose shop is in the Main Street, it is thought that Adams were just the suppliers of the horse-drawn hoe and not its makers; another “suppliers” plate on the farm scales (for pounds and stones, not kilos!) is that of “G and J Peck of Ely” whose modern premises are in Lisle Lane. An Ely firm which DID make things was Eagle Foundry (the site is now an Auction Room, formerly Morrisses in Downham Road). The railings on the 1901 bridge over the Old West River between Willingham and Aldreth still proudly show “Eagle Foundry, Ely” through the rust! A **CAKE BREAKER** rescued from Bedlam Farm and given to the museum by Morton Brothers, was made at the foundry and stands at the east end of the barn.

A family related to me by marriage is that of the Drakes of Sutton-in-the-Isle; headed by Richard, the family business grew and developed employing dozens of local people; straw and marsh grass were “cooked” in a factory near Sutton Railway station and the resultant mixture was sent by train to London for horse-feed; one of Richard’s sons, H.L., developed a haulage business in Ely (later taken over by the British Road Haulage in the Labour Government after the war) and another, A.C., had hardware and cycle shops at both Sutton and Haddenham; for family sentiment the **PIG TROUGH** displaying “A.C. Drake, Sutton” is still in my garden holding pots of herbs!

Next time you visit the Farmland Museum at Denny Abbey, do look out for any more “Cambridgeshire Manufacturers”.....I may well have missed some and in these days when so many things are not even made in this COUNTRY, it is good to see “our” COUNTRY was once so thriving! The farming exhibits at Denny are now classed as the COUNTRY AGRICULTURAL COLLECTION; perhaps a special “events” day could be organised drawing attention to all the things which have their origin in this county, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Hamence Day Books

I had the opportunity to look through the Day Books of a wheelwright and undertaker from the village of Sutton in the Isle and the costings of one and a half centuries ago make interesting reading eg in 1860

To cut wheat and oats – 7/6 per acre

Mending ladder side – 6d

Light horse tree – 9d

Barrel of gas tar – 10/-

Prices by 1870 were a little higher:

A child's coffin and lining – 3/6

Mending a lid for copper – nails and time – 1/-

To make a milking stool – 1/- (was it three-legged?)

Half day man and nails – 1/9 (wonder what he made!)

Set of hames for horse – 1/9 (what would the price be now in Antique shop?)

By the turn of the century it is recorded that:

New barrow wheel/painting and putting on tyre – 5/6

To make a new 21-rung ladder - 10/6

Pitch pine coffin complete - £3 (how much today?)

Labour for self and two men – 10/6 (for how long?)

12 lb of red paint – 6/-...(would be used to paint carts etc)

Note: 12d = 5p, a shilling; 20 shillings to a pound; an acre is 4840 square yards (land is now measured in hectares....a bigger measurement)

Before the days of mass entertainment, story-telling with the family sitting round the open fire was very much a winter-evening time-filler

A story, also involving a coffin, was told me by a present-day member of the Hamence Family; it makes intriguing reading:

Back in the Nineteen Sixties a coffin-on-wheels was spotted in Pingle Lane (off the main road from Haddenham to Witcham Toll. Tethered to it was a whippet-like dog. To whom did they belong? The mystery was solved later that evening when an elderly "man of the road" returned to the lane on his bike...he had spent his days going from house to house offering to sharpen knives, grass-cutting shears etc on a mechanism which was operated by "pedalling" his bike in situ, thus earning himself a little money with which he could buy food. It was said that at night the coffin became his

sleeping quarters and the dog was left there all day to guard the old man's earthly possessions. A few weeks later both dog and coffin were no longer to be seen....off to another village searching for sharpening jobs and payment it would seem. Does any reader recall the coffin story?

The Hamence family still live and farm in the locality; David, now in his seventies, recalled a lot of words and fen expressions from his youth.....and from listening to a lot of farm workers yarning over the years. Here is a list of some of them:

Sloans – fruit of the blackthorn ie sloes (a good drink when infused in gin)

Somershams –string tied round bottom of trouser legs to prevent them getting slubby (ie wet and muddy)...lallygags serve a similar use

Boss-eyed – a person with a sight defect eg squint

Roadster – tramps who walked from village to village, sleeping in barns etc. and sometimes doing menial tasks for food/money

Fleak – a section of hay/straw cut from the stack with a CUT KNIFE; the word SHUT KNIFE was a multi-task tool carried in pocket; a PEN KNIFE, much smaller, was used for sharpening quills (large feathers) with which to make a writing instrument....ie a pen.

Yelm/yealm – quantity of wheat straw (or reeds) wetted and used for thatching stacks/house roofs

Holdye boy – lad to lead horses when sheaves were being loaded from shocks onto carts (see” No boys for the horses”, a record of school log books compiled by Doctor Sarah Burton)

Jump -dyke – joint of lamb roasted for Sunday lunch

Bread and pullet – not a lot to eat

Chap/chappa/fella/mato – Fen words for mate, buddy

Steaming – local word for threshing corn stacks, the machine being powered by steam ie in the days before combine harvesters

Conk/cud/snout – nose

Caca –excreta from calves/ babies; how did this Italian word reach the Fens?

Treading chaff – occupation often given to children to stamp around to pack more chaff (chopped straw for animal-feed)into Chaffhus

“Took ole boy up to be shod”- bought him a pair of boots (hob-nailed soles) often referred to as CLODOPPERS

“He wor pickled” – he was drunk....too much beer!

Five Saturdays and Five Sundays in a month – was thought to predict bad weather; ref Red sky at night.....red sky in morning- shepherd's warning

“I'm gorn shocking” – building up sheaves into shocks/stooks for them to dry; to be left for “three church bells” ie three weeks before gathering in.

Give 'im a good 'iding – boys used to fight; note no H
Bet you a tanner – sixpence was a lot of money 50 years ago!
On his last legs/he will soon snuff it/the reaper cometh – to die
Buy things on tick – pay later (often after harvest)
I've known him since he was a pup – known him all his life
“Good God above, send down with love
Scythes as sharp as sickles
To cut the throats of all such folk
As grudge their servants vitals”... a rhyme to punish masters who deprive
their workers of good food, as many did in the Good Old Days
“One boy a good boy, two boys half a boy and three boys no use at
all”...one boy can be helpful, more than one creates problems!



Class at Sutton School in Edwardian Days; note the clothes!



Grandson John astride the bull which was taken round the village (1950) to service cows; no dairy herds in Sutton today.



John and David with calves at the Young Farmers Show.



Brothers John and David astride the bull.



The Hamence family: Father wheelwright John and his two sons.

Observations re the Fens

PLANES AND BIRDS

The "Game Book" used by shooters in the early part of the last century has now often been replaced by the "Country Sportsman's Record Book and Journal" in which much space is provided to record events of a particular day. In my book the entry for the 20th January, 2001 shows the bag as nil. The "Remarks" entry fills most of the page with the following observation:

Walking down Hoghill Drove (what a fascinating name!) on my way to the Old West, I noticed a male Hen Harrier (sounds a contradictory term), flying slowly at about two metre high above a field of stubble. I paused, concealing myself behind one of the few bushes which has been allowed to survive in the fen, and watched the superb slow-flying ability of the bird.

Suddenly it climbed very quickly and I looked to find the reason for the sudden ascent: flying above, at a height of about 60 metre, was a bird which later turned out to be a Fieldfare, being pursued by a Sparrow Hawk. The Harrier joined the Hawk in the dog-fight (three Royal Air Force names in one sentence!) I watched amazed for about five minutes as the battle continued, during which time the Hawk must have made about fifty attacks on the Fieldfare: all, surprise, surprise, with no contact whatsoever.

It attacked from above, below and occasionally flew off as though it had lost interest only to turn and race in again, the Harrier trying all the time to join in. It was rather like a bomber versus a fighter in Royal Air Force terms

By this time I was willing the Fieldfare to escape after seeing its avoiding tactics. The drama came to a sudden close and unexpected ending: the Fieldfare swooped down in to a willow tree closely followed by the Sparrowhawk. The outcome I will never know as in the gathering dusk and being some way from the tree, I was unable to see. I would like to think the Fieldfare escaped – it certainly deserved to survive.

Grunty Fen....why was it so named?

Often I am asked where is this strange-sounding fen....it is the low-lying area between the Witchford and Wilburton ridges and in his book *THE BLACK FENS* Astbury describes it as "mostly heavy, terrible and horrible; a land-locked fen totally enclosed by the mineral soil of the island of Ely

The writer Dorothy Summers, in *THE GREAT LEVEL*, states: Grunty Fen, common land of 1300 acres, provided summer grazing for the inhabitants of Stretham, Wilburton, Witchford, Wentworth and Hadnam

Drained as late as 1850 it was sectioned up into allotments for villagers of those parishes and in 1901 the TIGER, a public house was built adjacent to the Grunty Fen Drain (Moore's map 1654) to provide beer for thirsty Ag Labs who toiled on the unshaded land

The Grunty Fen torc (see my book *REFLECTIONS*) was unearthed there in the 1840s and a wood-sectioned hospital erected there (but never used) during the First World War

Two delightful paintings by Wicken artist, Anthony Day, hang in the tea room at Denny Abbey; they portray the isolation of Fen Farms

Searching the origin of names Reaney quotes: GRUNTIFEN 1221,
GRUNTYNGFELDE 1370,
GRUNDEFEN 1604 and the meaning? A shallow-bottomed muddy place

FARM HORSE GENTLE GIANT

For centuries the source of power for Fen Farms was the HORSE. Hence older people often refer to machines as being "ten horse power" The relationship between horse and man was very special and Aubrey Scott, a true Fen man, was one such admirer of the capabilities of the horses; he loved to tell stories of these GENTLE GIANTS Here is just one anecdote and it is dedicated to him; sadly he did not live long enough to see this publication of WORDS TWO although he had contributed many Fen Words to the lists over the recent months.

Dear Reader,

Funny how Life pans out; here I am at 26 years old; you may not think this is not old – but it is for me as I am a 21hands-high horse.

At the moment my health is quite good as I roam in my retirement home, very happily I might add. It gives me lots of time to reminisce and my mind goes back to my younger days. I cannot remember either of my parents, but I can remember my master, who not only ran a pub but was a smallholder as well.

My life with him was not good; he had no patience at all and often beat me. If for instance we were in a field ploughing he would shout instructions instead of talking to me nicely. I found his instructions were often confusing – if for instance he shouted "cubby wutch" and I misunderstood, it would be a slap with a stick on my hindquarters; when walking along furrows – one hoof out of place- he would rant and rave "you stupid lump of horse flesh, all you are good for is the knacker's yard"

Then low and behold things started to change! He found with his work piling up he could not cope (until I got a lot older I then realised overwork could have been some of his problem) He employed a lad to look after me; he was brilliant and his name was Aubrey. We had an immediate rapport, we got on so well together. He talked to me all the time in a softly-spoken voice which was music to my ears and although I of course could not answer, we understood each other completely

I was groomed every day and my fetlocks were washed; I had regular visits from the farrier to make sure my shoes were alright. My tail was neatly plaited and on show days my mane was sorted as well I felt rellly great and the world seemed a better place. Every morning, rain, hail or shine Aubrey entered my stall at 5.30 am and I was always ready for my sifting and fresh water. He would then go and have his own breakfast. I was harnessed and ready for a day's work; we were always in the field and ready to start work by 7.30.

By now my life was so much better and it was more of a joy than a chore to do my work. No more getting shouted at; Aubrey left me to it most of the time. I knew how fast to go, when to stop, when to turn; I even knew when it was time to return to my stable. Our relationship was great and we were always complimented on our ploughing skills and how straight a line we kept....none of this having a lad in the front to lead me, very bad form, and life was good..

My name, by the way, is Blossom sorry I omitted to tell you earlier. Now of course heavy horses seem to be obsolete in favour of mechanisation and today with computers etc in the tractors they almost run themselves! Years ago when most of the Fen men

were Ag Labs (you no longer hear this term) for now a computerised machine can do in minutes what a horse and his keeper did in a day.

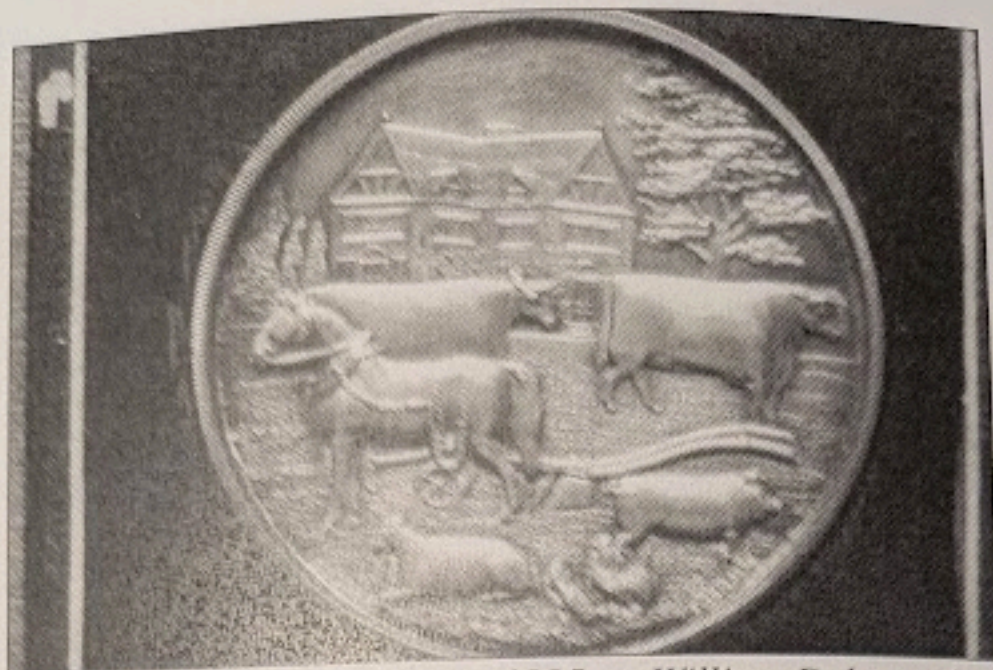
I suppose in many ways we must accept change, but it is very hard for such as myself, to accept. Thank God there are people who love the Heavy horse breeds, if not we would all be obsolete as well. As my Life draws to a close I often reflect on years gone by, the work I have done and the people I have met. I have so many memories in my head and feel very privileged that my life has been so blest.

Even in my retirement Aubrey does not forget me, he visits on a regular basis and always sheds a few tears when it is time for him to leave, I can't wait for his next visit which I really look forward to.

In this fast changing world I realise just how lucky I have been. I have a lovely stable, a beautiful meadow to roam in and I am looked after very well. To the left of the meadow is a large wooded area, the branches of the trees sway softly in the breeze, after a long winter all sorts of birds are making their appearance and how lovely it is to hear their chirps and calls. Already the leaves are turning green; the hawthorn bushes are a delight. The ground between the trees has been full of snowdrops followed by the bright yellow daffodils and soon it will be time for the bluebells, what more could one ask.

In the other direction (with a fence between us) the cows are spending more time outside and in the distance I can see the river bank, although I cannot actually see the river I know it is there. It will soon be filled with voices coming from the narrow boats and the leisure craft as people begin to emerge now that winter is over. I feel very content and living in The Isle of Ely is my idea of bliss.

Whoa – I shall have to close my memory down for now – I spy Aubrey in the distance coming towards me, oh what joy.



Medal awarded at the Doncaster Show, 1885, to William Delanoy for the best assortment of harness; note the simplicity of the single-furrow plough. What contrast to today's machines.

Shirt Making in Littleport. Past and Present.

By William Chapman. 1883

Our Mothers may boast – now think of their ways-
Of shirt making done when in their young days,
A straight thread was drawn in wristband and collar
The needle went through, the cotton did follow.

They back-stitched and fore-stitched, hem'd and did fell:
As they looked o'er their work, thought it done well;
Their forefinger rough, and thumbs like a riddle-
Stab'd and pierced on both sides and over the middle.

Good needles and thimbles were then in full cry,
In years that are past, in days now gone by-
Now used by old who are grey, young who are green;
But they must give place to the sewing machine.

They worked and they toiled, and made no delay,
To make a good shirt was the work of the day
Now tell your dear Mother, make known to your cousin
They are making good shirts to count by the dozen.

To the minute of time they reg'larly meet,
Walk to their table and there-take a seat
By working the treadle the needle will fly
Turns pence into shillings and so on they try.



The shirt factory, later used by Burberrys, and owner Peacock (inset)

THOMAS PEACOCK

Thomas Peacock was christened in St Georges Church, Littleport in 1828; he was a son of John and Elizabeth Peacock, who farmed on the outskirts of the village

He attended school, upon leaving; the farm could not support Thomas and his two brothers as well, so Thomas became apprenticed to Robert Sayle at Cambridge. The Peacock and the Sayle family, who came from Southery just over the border into Norfolk, were good friends.

He served his apprentice and for a short time he worked in the west end of London, he did not seem to like this very much so returned to Robert Sayles in Cambridge.

On behalf of Robert Sayle he then went firstly to India, where they opened a shop, from there he went to Hong Kong to open an emporium. By this time he was fast becoming an expert on silk, materials and ceramics.

In 1865 he married a young girl by the name of Mary Worthington in St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong. They returned to England in about 1869 and they lived in London.

Thomas decided to open a cut price shop making and selling shirts. Everyone told him he was making a mistake and it would not work – but it did and the shirts sold like hot cakes. He was fast making a name for himself and becoming rich in the process. He decided to come back to his roots as he wanted to help the women of the village, after first residing in Hope House he eventually bought The Grange in Littleport, at that time it was one of the finest houses in the area, with lawns and gardens, he built a skating area especially for his children.

The shirt factory which Thomas named Hope Brothers was built in 1882 and at one point he employed 400 people, which included out workers. Not content with that the churning out of shirts, collars and pyjamas he purchased Connaught House and built on to the back of it Alexandra hall, which contained a large library and reading room, all the board and card games of the time, bathrooms (as most houses in the village did not have a bathroom) these were to help his workers, outside tennis courts and croquet pitch.

Beaconsfield Terrace (a row of eight houses) was also built to house some of the families, the Alexandra Hall was a godsend to his female employees, they were given parties, dinners and more BUT no males were ever allowed to attend – females only. The only males that worked in the factory were the manager of the factory the cutter, the mechanic and boiler man needed to keep the factory going. He owned a great deal of property and land in Littleport.

He purchased an area of about thirty acres known as the Moors, in the winter it was deliberately flooded to a depth of 12" and as the frost set in, it became a skating rink – Thomas was exceedingly fond of skating and good at it as well. One year the skating championship was held, with skaters coming from far and wide. It was said that at least five thousand people were present with many coming from London by train, the main prize was a magnificent cup purchased by Thomas, unfortunately a few years later it went missing – how Littleport would love to have it back. He owned the local brickworks, in fact he owned a great deal of property and land in the village.

He must surely rank as the biggest benefactor Littleport has ever had. He achieved what he set out to do 'help the women of the village'.

Unfortunately Mary was not keen on country life, so they moved back to London. But Thomas still spent a lot of his time in Littleport in his beloved factory. He also recruited girls from the village to go as staff in his London home.

He had fourteen children in all, thirteen of them grew to adulthood and one died aged six.

By this time he had twenty four shops up and down the country and was a very wealthy man.

He died at his home in London in 1895 at the age of 67; he had been in Littleport just a few days before his death.

His loss was great and many attended his funeral. It is gratifying that Littleport is mentioned on his tomb stone.

Although Hope Brothers factory is no more (it is now luxury flats). Thomas will never be forgotten by the people of Littleport.

Maureen's Reminiscences

Here I am 10-30 Saturday morning, 29th September 2012 sitting in the former J H Adams and sons shop.

Surrounded by the most incredible artefacts, photographs of the village, chairs, chains, spades, forks, skates, boxes, old tools of every description, glass ware, tin jugs, ledgers galore plus the modern living book, choc-a-bloc full of history and the superb models of the shop and barn (long since gone).

The woodwork in this former shop really is something to behold, it has to be seen to be believed. One can only hope that the majority is left as it should be.

11am time to let the public in for this open day, people are starting to enter, I hope lots of people show up, as everything really is worth seeing, enjoying and studying. More people have turned up than I thought so had to stop writing and talk, lots of interest and the photos are causing lots of comments. The crowd are very friendly, and are more than willing to talk to you, lovely to have discussions on everything around.

Weather outside is looking good, best day of the week with lots of sun. Even though lots of people have passed through it is still amazing how many pass by. I guess not everyone is interested - such a shame- they miss so much about their heritage.

Unfortunately by 2 pm it had quietened down. Littleport really is dead on a Saturday afternoon – how life changes over the years and not always for the better I am afraid.

The Littleport Society has been going for 25 years and a good job has been done by all. This village may not be the prettiest of places, but its history is fantastic and new facts come to light all the time.

Fenlanders are like no other, a hardy race by any standards – but not people to be messed with. They all have very strong views. Over time they have been very much maligned.

In the Riots of 1816 they did what they did mainly because they were hungry. But I guess it was good for Australia as they got a lot of good, hard working people. But of course the poor souls that were hung were the martyrs.

There are so many notables in Littleport from the Harley (Davidson) family to Royal photographers.

Pat, a farmer's son, was the first tutor at the Cambs Farm College (now West Anglia University); his first love was engineering. In his retirement he recalls memories of his Fen youth when water was not available at the turn of a tap. What would today's children think of getting water to drink from a wellor even from the local river?

"In so many situations the domestic water supply was a pump which had to be as near the farmhouse door as possible. So too had the domestic "privy" though the needs were vastly different and so were the effects! Sense of hygiene was difficult to maintain especially in high summer it provided a rich ground-work for the study of entomology (the rat-tailed maggot about three feet long comes to mind) and the discomfort of enteritis and other infections. For the second fact, that of village pumps, often these were "pumped dry" when houses or farm fires occurred....the only other source of water was village ponds and the liquid mud from these would often block the intake pipe and spell the proud end to the fire engine's life as happened at both Hinton Hall and Haddenham Pumping Engine blazes

The most simple form of pump which was in common usage from the early Middle Ages was the "Common Pump". The same sort of mechanism which stood outside the back door of Linden Farm when I was a boy: like so many "posh" houses there was a ducting of arched brick-work which communicated with the outside well of the outside pump to an indoor pump over the kitchen sink. Not a very good idea for health reasons! These pumps were not easy to make; they were real craftsman jobs and were frequently mounted over the top of existing wells which had been dug for bucket-and-chain use and just boarded over. How many accidents have occurred when the "covering" of such wells has rotted away and people have fallen down the shaft?"

Pat was always interested in "anything engineering" which resulted in him being asked to draw up the technical aspects of moving the mill in the NT property at Wicken Fen (where it originally pumped water OUT of the fen) to higher ground where it now pumps water INTO the fen (to maintain suitable water level for fen flora and fauna) He wrote: "I was in the midst of its removal and restoration in 1955/56; it formerly stood beside Harrison's Drove in Adventurer's Fen and was known as Norman's Mill (no relation!) I made all the measured drawings of the mill before it was dismantled and redesigned the scoop wheel and drainage channel. I learned never try or take on anything like that again....although I have drawn many mills since"

Another local project for Pat was to make drawings of Stretham Old Engine as part of a project undertaken by the Newcomen Society of which he was a life member; it is good to report that the 2014 brochure has copies, albeit small, of his original drawings

It is pleasing that the work of a local man "lives on" for visitors in the twenty-first century as both Wicken Mill and Stretham Old Engine are open to the public



Pat was of the generation who recall the days of the steam engines visiting farms to thresh the corn stacks in winter (pre-combine-harvesters)



Photo of the Fen cottage at the entrance of Wicken Fen (open some weekends)

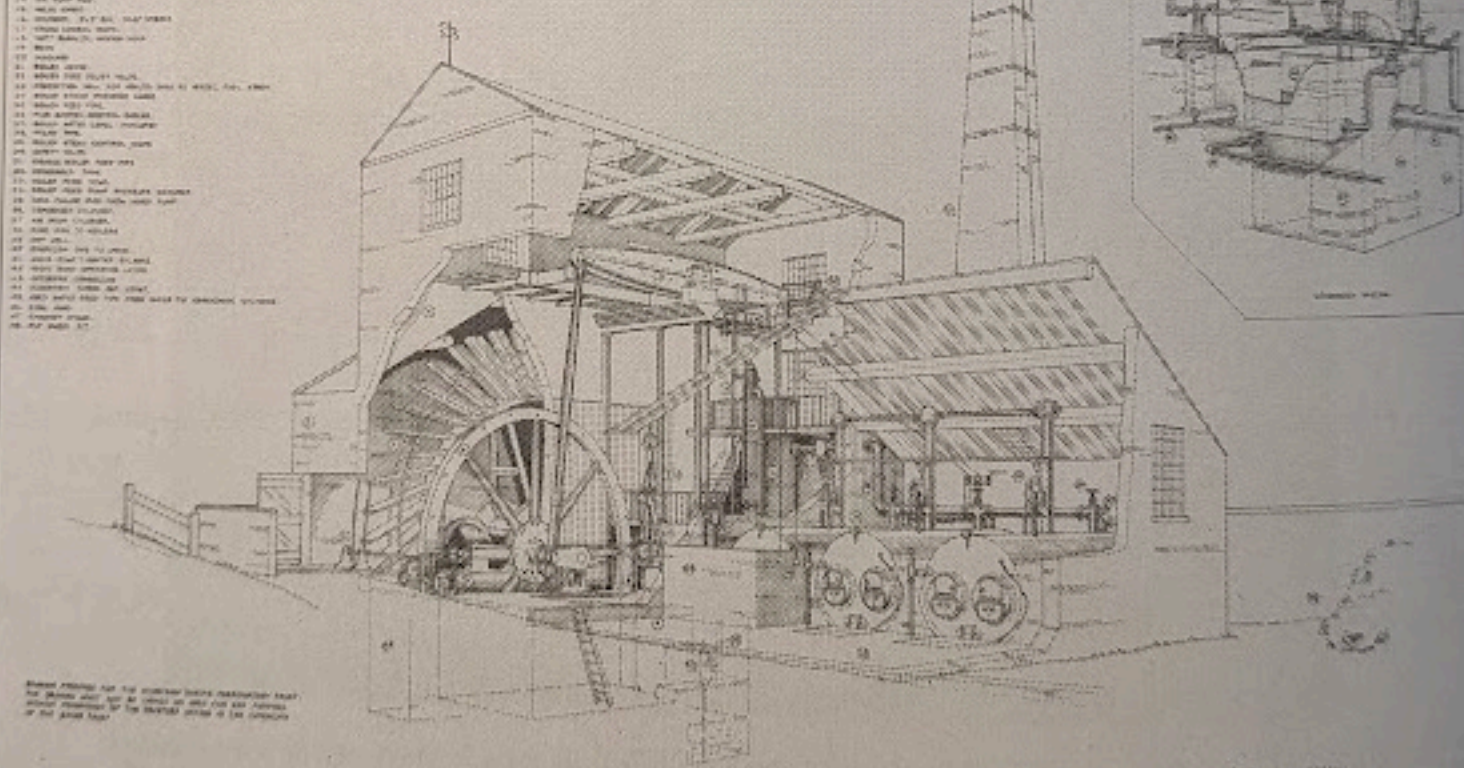


Photo of the mill, rebuilt by Soham firm of Fysons.

STRETHAM OLD ENGINE 1831

CONSTRUCTION BY J. F. F. F. F. F.

- 1. WINDMILL
- 2. WINDMILL
- 3. WINDMILL
- 4. WINDMILL
- 5. WINDMILL
- 6. WINDMILL
- 7. WINDMILL
- 8. WINDMILL
- 9. WINDMILL
- 10. WINDMILL
- 11. WINDMILL
- 12. WINDMILL
- 13. WINDMILL
- 14. WINDMILL
- 15. WINDMILL
- 16. WINDMILL
- 17. WINDMILL
- 18. WINDMILL
- 19. WINDMILL
- 20. WINDMILL
- 21. WINDMILL
- 22. WINDMILL
- 23. WINDMILL
- 24. WINDMILL
- 25. WINDMILL
- 26. WINDMILL
- 27. WINDMILL
- 28. WINDMILL
- 29. WINDMILL
- 30. WINDMILL
- 31. WINDMILL
- 32. WINDMILL
- 33. WINDMILL
- 34. WINDMILL
- 35. WINDMILL
- 36. WINDMILL
- 37. WINDMILL
- 38. WINDMILL
- 39. WINDMILL
- 40. WINDMILL
- 41. WINDMILL
- 42. WINDMILL
- 43. WINDMILL
- 44. WINDMILL
- 45. WINDMILL
- 46. WINDMILL
- 47. WINDMILL
- 48. WINDMILL
- 49. WINDMILL
- 50. WINDMILL
- 51. WINDMILL
- 52. WINDMILL
- 53. WINDMILL
- 54. WINDMILL
- 55. WINDMILL
- 56. WINDMILL
- 57. WINDMILL
- 58. WINDMILL
- 59. WINDMILL
- 60. WINDMILL
- 61. WINDMILL
- 62. WINDMILL
- 63. WINDMILL
- 64. WINDMILL
- 65. WINDMILL
- 66. WINDMILL
- 67. WINDMILL
- 68. WINDMILL
- 69. WINDMILL
- 70. WINDMILL
- 71. WINDMILL
- 72. WINDMILL
- 73. WINDMILL
- 74. WINDMILL
- 75. WINDMILL
- 76. WINDMILL
- 77. WINDMILL
- 78. WINDMILL
- 79. WINDMILL
- 80. WINDMILL
- 81. WINDMILL
- 82. WINDMILL
- 83. WINDMILL
- 84. WINDMILL
- 85. WINDMILL
- 86. WINDMILL
- 87. WINDMILL
- 88. WINDMILL
- 89. WINDMILL
- 90. WINDMILL
- 91. WINDMILL
- 92. WINDMILL
- 93. WINDMILL
- 94. WINDMILL
- 95. WINDMILL
- 96. WINDMILL
- 97. WINDMILL
- 98. WINDMILL
- 99. WINDMILL
- 100. WINDMILL



These drawings are for information only and do not constitute a contract. The drawings are the property of the author and are not to be used for any other purpose without the author's consent.

Pat's drawings of Stretham Old Engine.

Fen Crops: Wheat, sugar-beet, oilseed rape and a wide variety of vegetables provide food for the nation...perhaps the most popular crop is that of potatoes and here is a humorous poem about their many uses!

The Humble Spud

Just ponder on the potato awhile –
is there a vegetable more versatile?

Financially people are making a racket,
selling me baked still wearing my jacket.

Fry me in with a piece of fish
and I'm the major part of an expensive dish.

And consider, it may come as a surprise,
I'm just like a human, cos I have eyes!

Which reminds me, talking of sight,
I am NOT very pretty when I catch the blight...

But most of the time I am lovely I think
Cos I come in white and many shades of pink.

Finally, one fact should be known –
I bet I will continue to be grown!

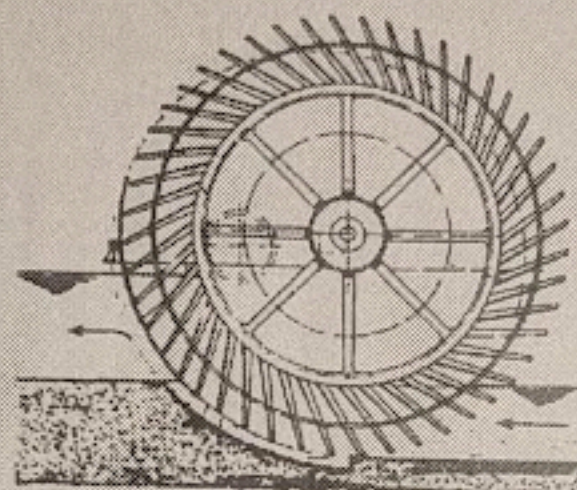
With the diversification of different farmcrops being grown, and much of our food being imported, it is good to note that Walter Raleigh's importation (of around 1598?) is still VERY POPULAR!!!

THE STRETHAM OLD ENGINE

A visit to the Stretham Old Engine is a rewarding experience for people willing to learn about Fenland history and industrial archeology. Close to the village of Stretham near Ely this land drainage pumping station (now disused) is scheduled as an Ancient Monument and has been restored by the Stretham Engine Trust. It contains a fine steam powered double-acting rotative beam engine, and is the last surviving complete example of its kind in the Fens. The Trust has leased the pumping station for one hundred years from the Waterbeach Internal Drainage Board.

Until the 17th century Fenland was mostly a vast marshy swamp covering some 1,300 square miles, with several islands of higher ground - such as the Isle of Ely. In 1630 the Earl of Bedford employed the Dutch engineer Vermuyden to drain the southern Fenland in order to create land for agriculture.

The drained soil then exposed to the air was mostly composed of peat, which began to shrink and waste, and the ground level of the fields began to fall. Over the years it became necessary to pump surplus rainwater from the fields up into the rivers, which had remained at the pre-drainage levels. At first, wind driven pumps (often loosely referred to as windmills) driving large scoop wheels were used to lift the low-lying water into the rivers.



A scoop wheel

As land levels shrank further even the wind pumps could not deal with the height of lift required (in places the fen is now some 6 metres below river level). Fortunately the invention of the powerful steam engine arrived in the nick of time.

The Old Engine at Stretham was one of over one hundred steam pumping engines installed throughout the Fens in the 19th and early 20th century to replace some 800 wind pumps. In times of heavy rains and danger of floods, farmers were reassured to see smoke rising from its tall brick chimney and to know that the Old Engine was at work in its slow but effective fashion - lifting the waters.

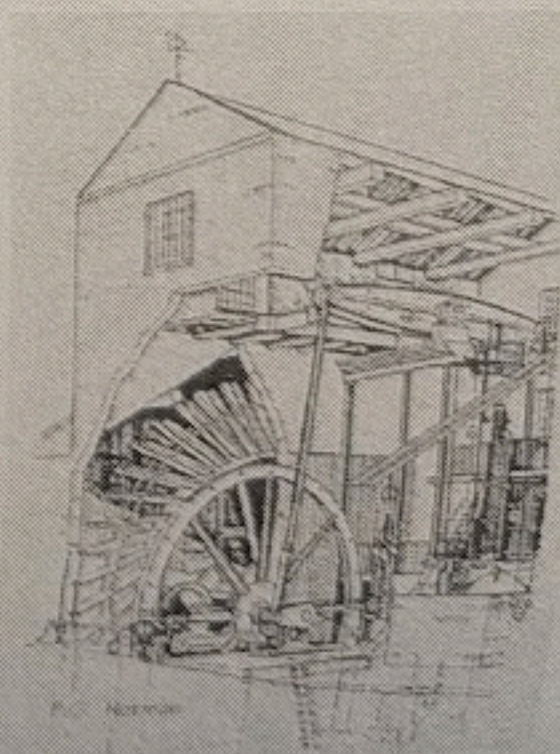
The Old Engine was installed in 1831 and operated successfully until 1925, and then was used as a stand-by until 1941. In 1925 it was superseded by a more powerful and efficient diesel engine (which is also on display), connected to a centrifugal pump. This operated until 1966, but by then had itself been superseded by another diesel engine on a different site in 1945.

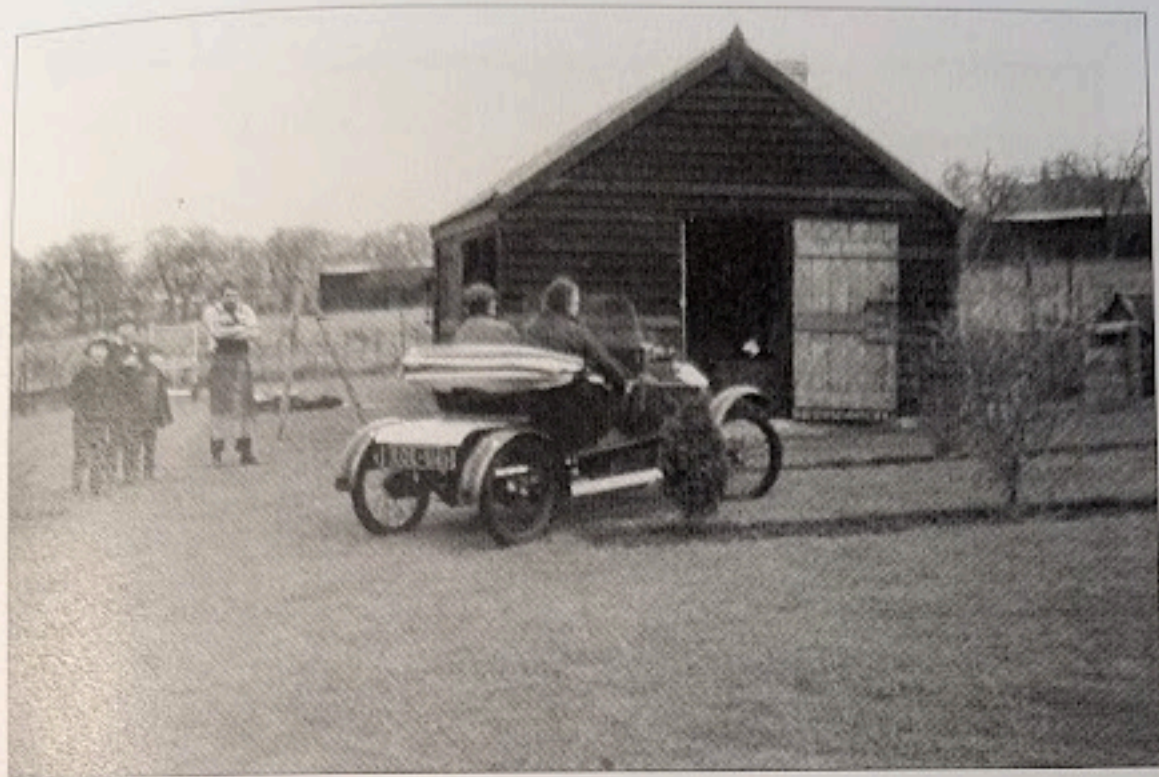
It is not possible now to operate the Old Engine by steam, so an electrical drive has been installed and the manner of its former operation is demonstrated on the days when the Engine is open to the public.

Displays about the history and development of land drainage and its machinery are shown on the top floor of the Engine Room.

In a building beside the coal yard is an 1829 vertical 10 h.p. steam engine of the type used in small pumping stations, and in the yard itself an old wooden Archimedean screw drainage pump.

Beside the bridge over the drain intake at the rear of the Old Engine is a restored centrifugal drainage pump manufactured about 1870 by Easton Amos & Anderson. It is the only example of this type of pump remaining in the Fens and was installed on a farm near Chatteris. It is believed to have been driven originally by a traction engine.





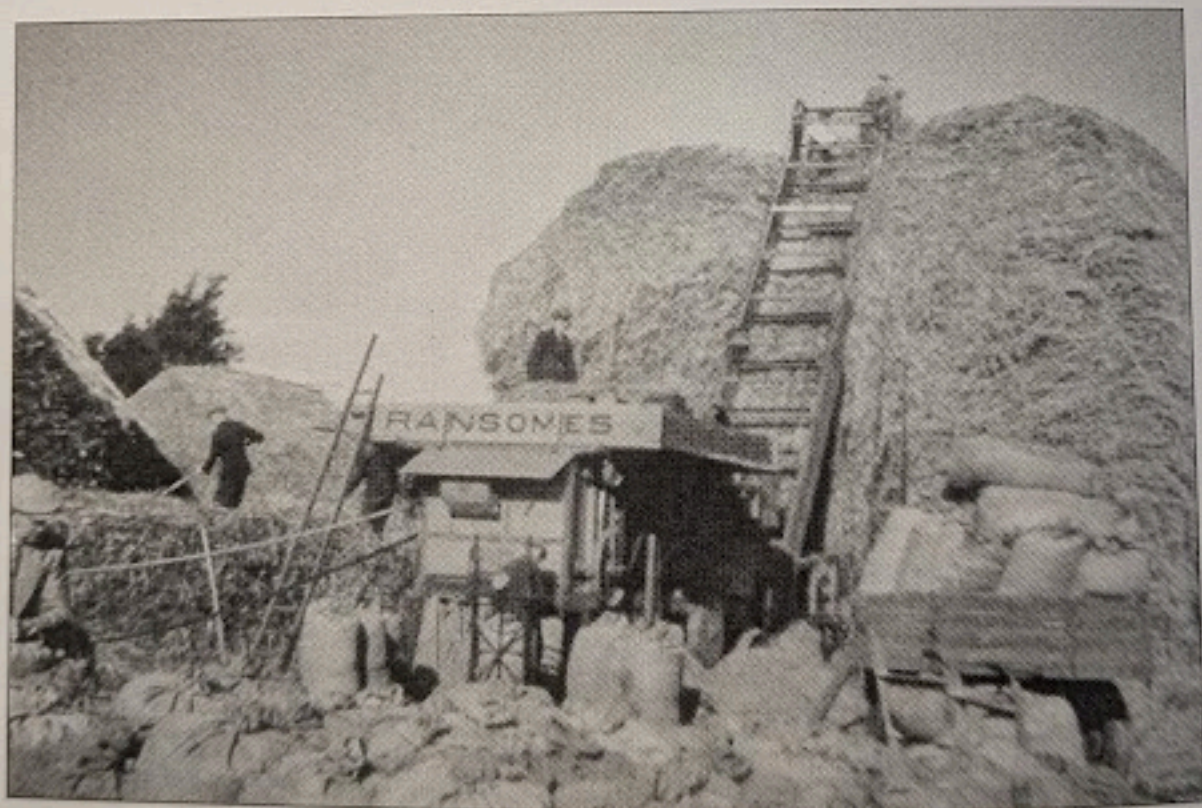
Vintage car outside newly-built Blacksmith Shop at Farmland Museum 1972.



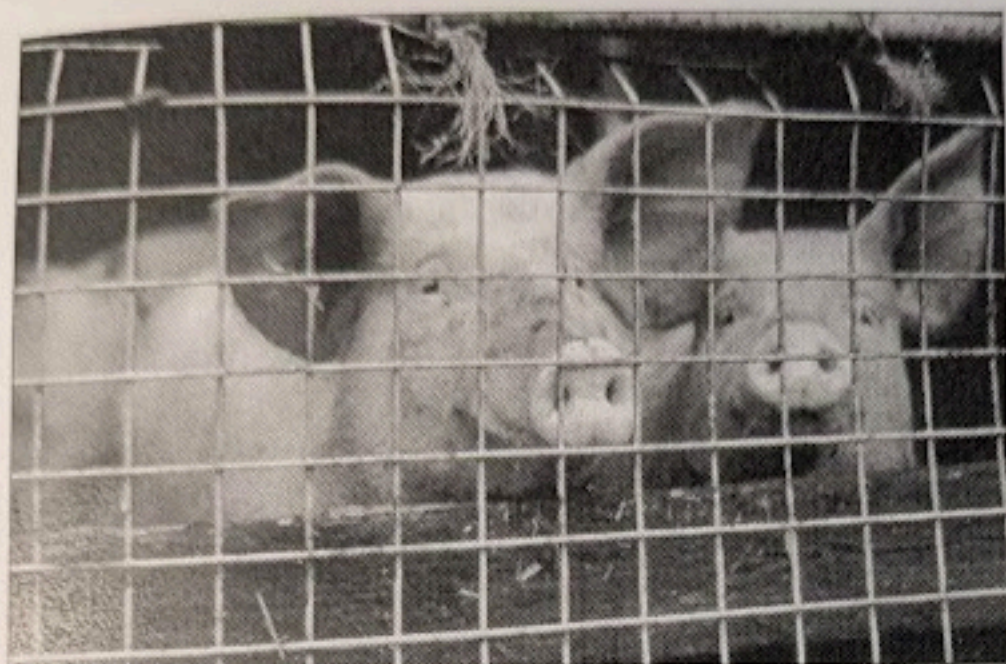
Group of helpers at Farmland Museum in special costumes for Blossoms & Bygones Day 1986.



The 'drum' powered by steam traction engine (and later by tractors) threshed the corn from the straw.



Sacks of wheat threshed from the corn stacks (often a winter occupation for the farm workers).



Many cottages kept 'a pig for the pat': pork could be salted down before the days of the deep freeze.



The Freeman & Palmer children in the hay field, 1916.

The landscape of the Fen Country is criss-crossed with water ways, both natural (Ouse, Lark) and man-made such as the two Bedford rivers stretching from Earith to Denver (see map on back cover). Drainage channels are vital to prevent fen fields (some of which are under sea level) from flooding.

Fen Waterway Names

The rivers have strange names you know,
Take for example POPHAM'S EAU.

After a bishop it would seem;

There is also one called MORTON'S LEAM.

BEDFORD NEW and BEDFORD OLD

Named after the Duke so I am told.

The RIVERS OUSE both LITTLE and GREAT

These two drainers did not create!

The WELL CREEK, WISSEY, LARK and NENE

(The latter pronounced to rhyme with "when")

Of unusual names we have a great wealth -

The FORTY and SIXTEEN FOOTS, a few lodes and the DELPH

But I love one above all the rest,

The slow, meandering RIVER OLD WEST.



*Photo of sheep grazing on the Hundred-foot Washes near Sutton Gault,
the first crossing of the Bedfords*

The second crossing is at Mepal where the 1986 flyover carries the traffic along the A142; from here may be seen evidence (now overgrown with bushes) of the washes' best-kept secreta canal linking the two man-made rivers, originally built to carry clay from the Gault Hole to build up the banks of the Old Bedford River.

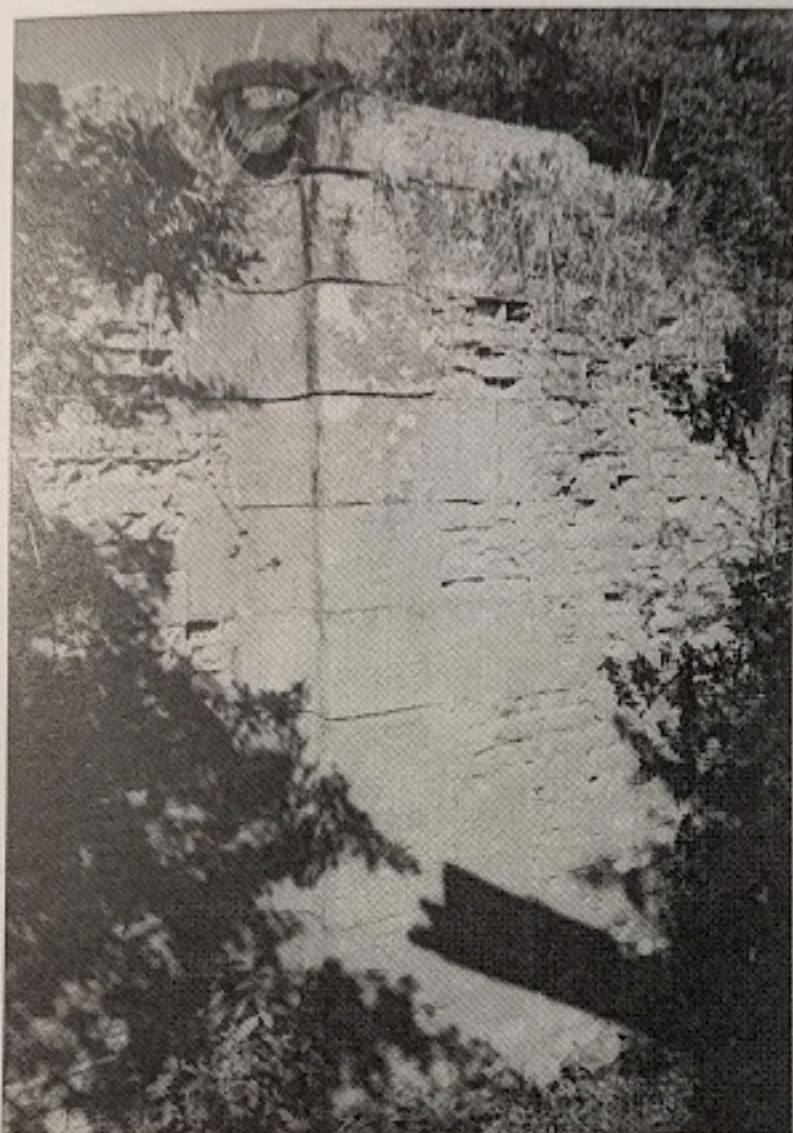
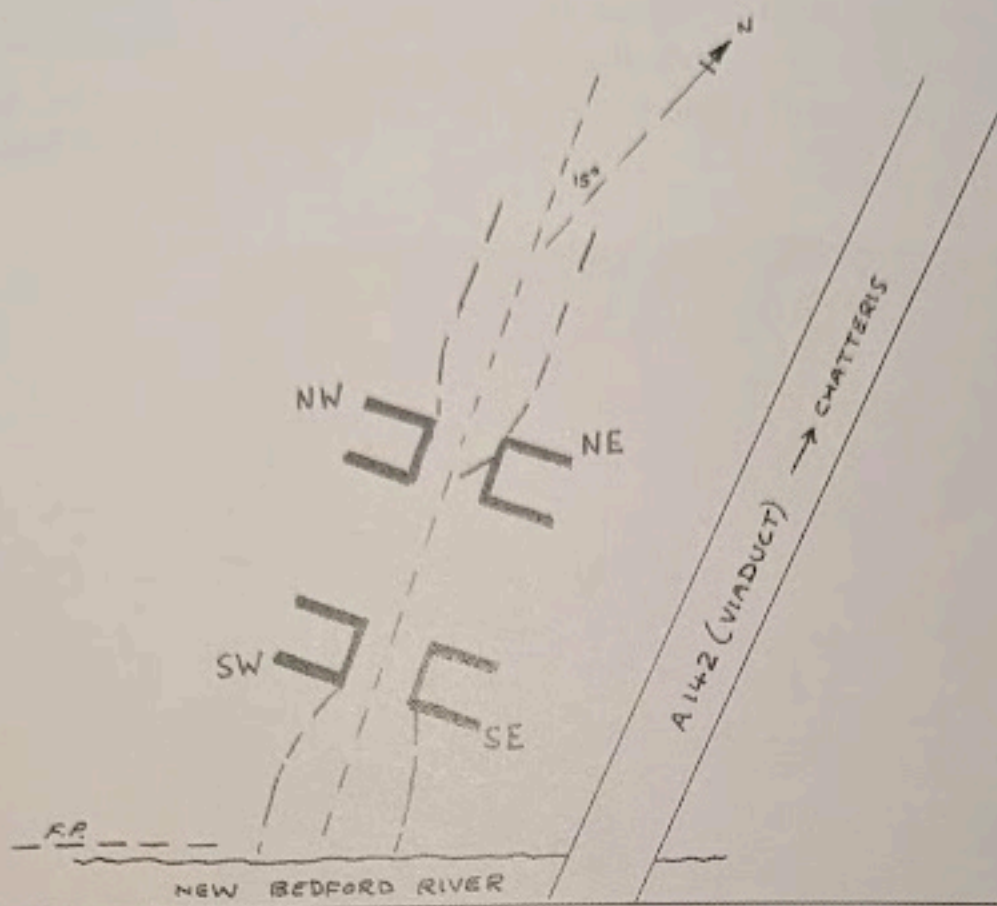
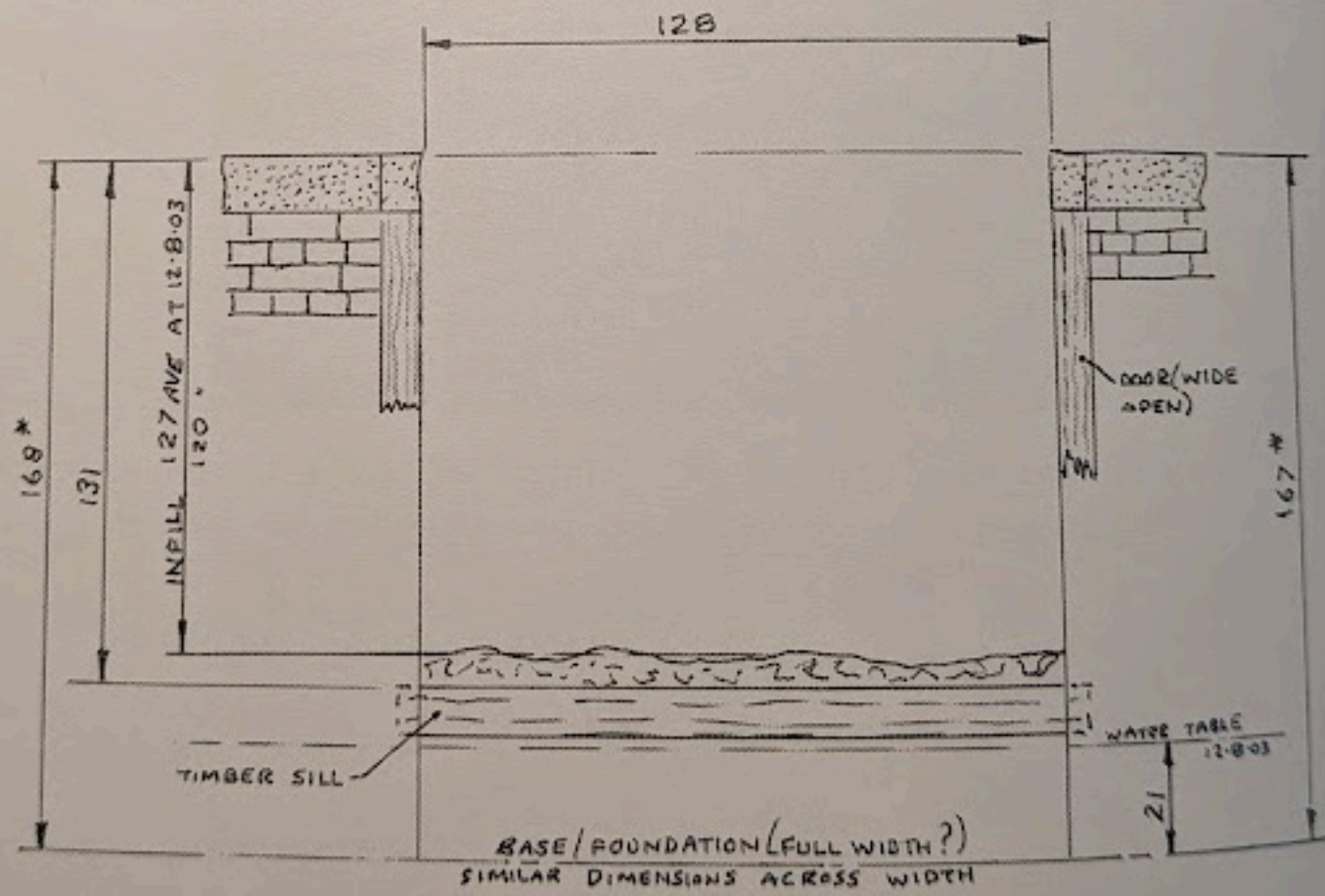


Photo of sluice made of big blocks of stone excavated at Clipsham, north of Stamford and dated pre 1800 ... how were they transported?



PLAN (NOT TO SCALE) SHOWING LOCATION OF LOCK & NOMENCLATURE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT



* THESE DIMENSIONS ESTABLISHED BY PROBE (NO PUMP FACILITY)

SPACE AVAILABLE IN LOCK



Ancient Bridge over the Great Ouse at St. Ives as it flows into the Fen Country.